CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: North Central Montana Regional Water Authority(NCMRWA) Core Pipeline	**Proposed Implementation Date: Fall 2021/Spring 2022**
Proponent: North Central Montana Regional Water Authority(NCMRWA) P.O. Box 2456 Havre, MT 59501	
Type and Purpose of Action: Installation of a 10" drinking water pipeline over and across four (4) tracts of land located in Choteau and Hill Counties. The pipeline is to be buried approximately 6' deep. The width of the right of way easements shall be 50'.	
Location: Sec. 36, T29N, R9E; Sec. 36, T29N, R12E -Choteau. Sec. 36, T30N, R12E; Sec. 36 T30N R9E-Hill **School Trust: Common Schools**	**County:** Choteau & Hill

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	
1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	DNRC, Surface owner NCMRWA- President- Larry Bonderud Kadrmas, Lee, & Jackson-Engineers- James Slayton
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	There are no other agencies with jurisdiction on this project.
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	Approve the requested drinking water pipeline. No action. Do not approve the requested drinking water pipeline.

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
RESOURCE	**[Y/N]** N = Not Present or No Impact will occur. Y = Impacts may occur (explain below)	**POTENTIAL IMPACTS**
4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compactable or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N]	Soils and geology in this area are suitable for the installation of a drinking water pipeline. The topography is flat to slightly rolling and the tracts are adjacent to the county roads which are near the pipeline route. Equipment will cause localized areas of soil compaction and will disturb the soil where the drinking water pipeline is being placed. These actions will be mitigated by the use of erosion fences around the construction area to prevent soil loss and erosion from the sites, and the area will be ripped, disked and returned to small grain production following installation of the drinking water pipeline. Cumulative impacts on soil resources are not expected.

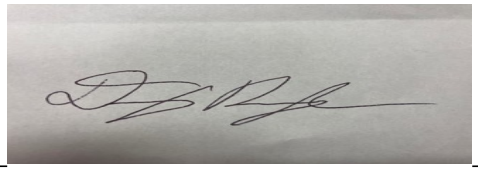
5.	WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] The proposed action is located away from any water resources and will not affect water quality.
6.	AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] The proposed action will not impact the air quality.
7.	VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] All four (4) sites are located on tracts that are classified agricultural land currently in small grain production. Crops have been harvested on all the tracts that were not in fallow. The summer fallow areas will be ripped and disked after the project is completed and returned to agricultural land. Noxious and annual weeds within the proposed construction areas are a concern, but this concern will be mitigated as the applicants are responsible for controlling weeds within the construction areas. Cumulative impacts on the vegetative resources are not expected as the proposed construction areas are continuously disturbed by the production of small grains.
8.	TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] The area where the construction is taking place is not close to any area currently being used by wildlife. Cumulative impacts are not likely to occur as the project areas are located in land that is used for small grain production. Construction may temporarily displace the area wildlife, but no long-term impacts will take place to their habitat.
9.	UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Sensitive Species or Species of special concern? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] There are no species of special concern or any other sensitive habitat types associated with the proposed project area.
10.	HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] There was no historical or archaeological sites noted in the project area as the tracts are continuously disturbed with the production of small grains.
11.	AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] Installation of the drinking water pipeline will not affect the aesthetics of the land in any way as it will not be visible. It will lead to no erosion of the soil resources on the tract as it is located six feet below the surface.
12.	DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] The demand on environmental resources such as land, water, air, or energy will not be affected by the proposed project. The proposed project will not consume resources that are limited in the area. There are no other projects in the area that will affect the proposed project.
		[Y] The proposal is a part of a large regional water system

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of other private, state or federal current actions w/n the analysis area, or from future proposed state actions that are under MEPA review (scoping) or permitting review by any state agency w/n the analysis area?	project that will provide drinking water to the Loma Water District. This project started in the early 1990's and funding has been secured from the various US stimulus packages since. Various environmental and engineering reports have been completed and are available on the internet.

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	[Y] The proposal is a part of a large regional water system project that will provide safe drinking water to the Loma Water District located in North Central Montana.
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[Y] The proposed drinking water pipeline will be buried six feet below the surface. This depth is great enough that Industrial, Commercial, and Agricultural activities and production will not be affected once the project is completed. Damages are anticipated and arrangements have been for compensation to those who's ground is affected.
16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number. Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[Y] The proposed action is of a large scale and will create various jobs during the construction process. Cumulative impacts are likely to occur as long-term employment will be created for jobs located in the maintenance and repair of the pipeline.
17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[Y] The proposed action will add to the local, state and federal tax revenue.
18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[Y] Substantial traffic will be added to the existing roads during the construction process. This problem will be mitigated because when the construction is finished, the traffic will return to normal levels. There will be no excessive stress placed of the existing infrastructure of the area after the construction process is completed.
19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N] The proposed project is in compliance with Federal, State, and County laws. No other management plans are in effect for the area.
20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] These tracts of state land have generally low recreational value as they are in a remote area of Choteau & Hill counties, adjacent to a county road. They are legally accessible to the public. The proposed project is not expected to impact general recreation activities on this State Land.
21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[Y] The proposed action is a part of a large construction project and will temporarily change the human population distribution and the housing requirements in the area. Surrounding towns

	will welcome the project due to the economic boast it will create.
22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[N] The proposed project will not alter the social structure of the surrounding native communities.
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[N] The proposed project will not impact the cultural uniqueness and/or cultural diversity of the area.
24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES: Is there a potential for other future uses for easement area other than for current management? Is future use hypothetical? What is the estimated return to the trust. Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[Y] The school trust will receive fair compensation for use of this property as NCMRWA. will pay for a LUL and for an easement for the installation of the drinking water pipeline. The project is a part of a large regional water system that will provide drinking water to the Loma Water District located in north central MT. Cumulative impacts are minimal as the drinking water pipeline will be buried six feet deep and will not affect the long term productivity of the ag leases on the tracts.

EA Checklist Prepared By:  Land Use Specialist –Havre Unit Date: 11/12/2021

Daniel Pendergraph Title

IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Approve the requested drinking water pipeline.
26. SIGN4IFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	Environmental Assessment reveals no significant potential impacts.
27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis: [ ] EIS [ ] More Detailed EA [XXX] No Further Analysis	

EA Checklist Approved By: Jocee Hedrick Lewistown Unit Manager

Name Title

11/12/2010

Signature Date